

## History of steamboating on the Minnesota River /

### **HISTORY OF STEAMBOATING ON THE MINNESOTA RIVER.\* BY THOMAS HUGHES.**

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The picturesque river which gave our commonwealth its name has always been an important feature in the geography and history of this northwest country.

The geologist reads in the deep erosion of this valley, and in its continuance to lake Traverse, which outflows to lake Winnipeg and Hudson bay, the story of a mighty river, the outlet of a vast ancient lake covering the Red river region in the closing part of the Glacial period. What use, if any, the primitive men of that time made of this majestic stream, we know not.

The Dakota tribes, whom the white explorers found dwelling upon our river's margin two or three centuries ago, called it "the sky-tinted", from the tincture given its water by the rich clayey soil of its valley. Their mortal foes, the Ojibways, whose home was among the somber pines of the north, were impressed with the greenness of its luxuriant foliage, and hence knew it as Ashkiibogi-Sibi, "the River of the Green Leaf." The French traders named it the St. Pierre (or St. Peter), probably in honor of one of their leaders who had been among the first to explore it.

Many and varied have been the scenes enacted upon its banks, scenes of thrilling adventure and glorious valor, as well as of happy merriment and tender love. It was for centuries the arena of many a sanguinary conflict, and the blood of Iowas, Dakotas, Ojibways, and white men, often mingled freely with its flood.

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### **EARLIEST NAVIGATION BY WHITE MEN.**

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For generations unknown the only craft its bosom bore was the canoe of the Indian. Then came the French traders, with their retinue of voyageurs, who made our river an avenue of a great commerce in Indian goods and costly furs. For over a hundred years fleets of canoes and Mackinaw boats, laden with Indian merchandise, plied constantly along the river's sinuous length. The sturdy voyageurs, however, left to history but a scant record of their adventurous life. A brave and hardy race were they, inured to every peril and hardship, yet ever content and happy; and long did the wooded bluffs of the Minnesota echo with their songs of old France.

The first white men known to have navigated the Minnesota were Le Sueur and his party of miners, who entered its mouth in a felucca and two row boats on September 20th, 1700, and reached the mouth of the Blue Earth on the 30th of the same month. The next spring he carried with him down the river a boat-load of blue or green shale which he had dug from the bluffs of the Blue Earth, in mistake for copper ore. Much more profitable, doubtless, he found the boat-load of beaver and other Indian furs, which he took with him at the same time. This is the first recorded instance of freight transportation on the Minnesota river.

In the winter of 1819–20, a deputation of Lord Selkirk's Scotch colony, who had settled near the site of Winnipeg, traveled through Minnesota to Prairie du Chien, a journey of about a thousand miles, to purchase seed wheat. On April 15th, 1820, they started back in three Mackinaw boats loaded with 200 bushels of wheat, 100 bushels of oats, and 30 bushels of peas. During the month of May they ascended the Minnesota from its mouth to its source, and, dragging their loaded boats over the portage on rollers, descended the Red river to their homes, which they reached early in June.

The Mackinaw or keel boats used on the river in those days were open vessels of from twenty to fifty feet in length by four to ten feet in width, and capable of carrying from two to eight tons burden. They were propelled by either oars or poles as the exigencies of the river might require. The crew usually comprised from five to nine men. One acted as

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steersman, and, in 133 poling, the others, ranging themselves in order upon a plank laid lengthwise of the boat on each side, would push the boat ahead; and as each, in rotation, reached the stern, he would pick up his pole and start again at the prow. Their progress in ascending the river would be from five to fifteen miles per day, depending upon the stage of water and the number of rapids they had to climb.

Dr. Thomas S. Williamson, the noted missionary to the Indians, in describing his first journey up the valley of the Minnesota, in June, 1835, gives an interesting account of how he shipped his wife and children and his fellow helpers, Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Huggins, with their goods, on one of these boats, which was nine days in making the trip from Fort Snelling to Traverse des Sioux.

In the correspondence of Mrs. S. R. Riggs, the wife of another famous missionary to the Sioux, is found a vivid picture of a Mackinaw boat, belonging to the old Indian trader, Philander Prescott, in which she ascended the Minnesota in September, 1837. It was about forty feet long by eight feet wide and capable of carrying about five tons. It was manned by a crew of five persons, one to steer, and two on each side to furnish the motive power. Oars were used as far as to the Little rapids, about three miles above Carver, and thence to Traverse des Sioux poles were employed. The journey consumed five days.

Illustrative of the size and capacity of some of the canoes used by the traders, we find George A. McLeod in April, 1853, bringing down from Lac qui Parle to Traverse des Sioux forty bushels of potatoes, besides a crew of five men, in a single canoe twenty-five feet long by forty-four inches wide, hollowed out of a huge cottonwood tree.

### **EARLIEST STEAMBOATS.**

The first steamboat to enter the Minnesota river was the Virginia on May 10th, 1823. She was not a large vessel, being only 118 feet long by 22 feet wide, and she only ascended as far as Mendota and Fort Snelling, which during the period between the years 1820 and 1848 were about the only points of importance in the territory now embraced within our

state. Hence all the boats navigating the upper Mississippi in those days had to enter the Minnesota to reach these terminal points.

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Except for these landings at its mouth, and save that in 1842 a small steamer with a party of excursionists on board ascended it as far as the old Indian village near Shakopee, no real attempt was made to navigate the Minnesota with steamboats until 1850. Prior to this time it was not seriously thought that the river was navigable to any great distance for any larger craft than a keel boat, and the demonstration to the contrary, then witnessed, has made that year notable in the history of the state.

### **EXCURSIONS IN THE YEAR 1850.**

In June, 1850, the Anthony Wayne, a Mississippi river boat in charge of Captain Daniel Able, arrived at St. Paul with a party of St. Louis people. They were a jolly crowd, and to enliven their trip had brought with them a small band of music from Quincy, Illinois. Just then there was quite a freshet in the Minnesota, and it was suggested to Captain Able that to entertain his guests he take his boat on an excursion up this river, then little known, to see the country. The people of St. Paul were soon enlisted in the project, and a purse of \$225 was raised to defray the expense.

On the day set, Friday, the 28th of June, early in the morning the Anthony Wayne, with her decks crowded with one hundred and fourteen of St. Paul's prominent citizens and the seventy St. Louis people, started on her memorable journey up the Minnesota. All nature seemed propitious. The day clear and balmy, the luxuriant vegetation freshened by recent showers, and the river full to the brim, glistening like silver between its winding avenues of trees gaily decked and festooned in varied green, all combined to make a glorious paradise of this most charming of valleys. Louis Pelon and Thomas J. Odell, because of their acquaintance with the river, acted as pilots.

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At Fort Snelling our excursionists found Captain Monroe with only fifty men in charge and expecting every moment to be summoned to Sauk Rapids to quell a disturbance by the Winnebagoes, which happened the next day. Here the military band, under the lead of Mr. Jackson, joined the excursion.

The first point of note above the fort, and at a distance of about three miles by land from it, was Black Dog's village, comprising a row of huts and tepees ranged on the brow of the north bluff. The intervening ground between the bluff and the 135 river was covered with patches of corn and beans, which the squaws were busily hoeing. Near by on the same side of the river, but close to its banks, they passed Man Cloud's village.

Five or six miles beyond (by land measure), Good Road's village stood on the south bank. About ten miles farther, and on the same side of the river, lay Six's village, where Samuel Pond had his mission station. Nearly opposite the present village of Chaska was a village of Wahpahton Sioux, where Louis Robert had a trading post, for which the boat unloaded some goods. At the foot of the rapids near Carver our steamer overtook a keel boat bearing the name "Rocky Mountains," whose crew were engaged in the arduous task of forcing their boat up the rushing waters by dragging it with a long rope passed around a tree above and by pushing it with their long poles. The Wayne concluded not to attempt the rapids, and turned her prow homeward.

The fuel having given out, the boat crew made a raid on an Indian cemetery close at hand, and replenished their stock from the dry poles and pickets there found. This vandalism was probably excused on the ground of necessity, no other dry wood being available. Be that as it may, it is certain that the steam generated by this funereal fuel soon carried the Wayne and her happy burden home. The voyage had proven eminently successful, and the people were wild in their praise of the river and the beautiful country it drained.

Emulous of the Wayne's achievement, the Nominee, a rival boat in command of Captain Orren Smith, got up another excursion party, and on the 12th of July sailed up the river,

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and passing the formidable rapids planted her shingle three miles above, and then returned home in triumph.

The Wayne, not to be thus outdone by a rival, on the 18th of the same month, with a third excursion on board, ascended again the now famous river. The Fort Snelling band participated also in this journey. Passing the rapids and the shingle of the Nominee on the first day, the Wayne spent her second night at Traverse des Sioux. Here the missionaries, Messrs. Hopkins and Hudgins and their families, extended generous hospitality; and the next morning they joined the party in their farther progress up the river. After partaking of a picnic dinner at the bend in the river two or three miles below the present city of Mankaro, our excursionists turned the prow of the Wayne homeward, 136 whence arriving they swelled the praise of the beautiful valley of the Minnesota more than ever.

Incited by the success of these boats, the Yankee, a steamer belonging to the Harris line, determined to outdo them all. Accordingly a big excursion, comprising most of the prominent officials and business men of St. Paul, was organized, and on Monday, the 22nd day of July, this ambitious little boat steamed into the mouth of the Minnesota. She was officered by M. K. Harris, captain, J. S. Armstrong, pilot, G. W. Scott, first engineer, and G. L. Sargent, second engineer. The Fort Snelling band was again in requisition. Late on the afternoon of the second day the boat passed Traverse des Sioux, where the missionaries had just harvested a small field of wheat, probably the first ever raised in the valley. It certainly was fitting that this first year of steamboating in the valley should also be the first year to grow that commodity which was to play so important a part in the river's traffic.

The second night was spent at the upper end of Kasota prairie. It was a charming moonlight night, and a number of the Yankee's party held a dance on the grassy floor of this level plateau. The band furnished the music (some of the dancers said that several mosquito bands were out too).

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Early Wednesday the Yankee started up stream again, soon passing the sign the Anthony Wayne had fastened to a neighboring tree the week before. On the mound at the mouth of the Blue Earth our travelers found a small Indian trading post, belonging to H. H. Sibley, in charge of a Frenchman. Discovering here in the sand what seemed to be pieces of cannel coal, they were told by the Frenchman that two or three miles up the Blue Earth there was a solid bed of coal four feet thick in a bluff. This must have been the same wonderful bluff in which Le Sueur found his copper mine, but as no such bluff was ever afterward known in that locality, and as the Frenchman also mysteriously disappeared, there may be some ground for the report that he stole it, or it may have been all "bluff," a French "bluff."

By the third evening the boat reached a point a little above the present village of Judson in Blue Earth county. Even thus late in the season (July 24th), the stage of water in the river was excellent, and no difficulty so far had been incurred in its navigation. It was voted that evening to proceed again on the morrow, 137 but the intense heat (which had been 104 degrees in the shade that day) and the swarms of mosquitoes prevented both crew and passengers from sleeping. For that reason, and because provisions were nearly exhausted, the vote was reconsidered in the morning, and the fourth night found them again at Traverse des Sioux.

On the next day they spent an hour at Six's village. The old chief, with about a hundred of his braves, came down to the landing to meet them, and there he made a speech claiming big damages because the excursionists had tramped down his corn. True, the corn had been drowned out and washed away by the high water long before the whites landed; but then, the Great Spirit was angry because they had taken those big fire canoes up the river, and that was why the freshet came, so they ought to pay for the corn. How Six (or "Half a Dozen," as James Goodhue of the "Pioneer" called him) succeeded with his damage suit is not stated, but our travelers reached St. Paul all safe by night.

Never did they forget the beautiful country they had seen, and the delightful journey they had taken on its most picturesque highway. Nearly all the prominent people of the

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Territory, and scores of visitors from the East, had participated in one or more of these excursions. The navigability of the Minnesota by steamboat was now a demonstrated fact, and the desirability for settlement of the fertile country it drained was by these eye witnesses everywhere enthusiastically heralded. This focusing of the public eye on the valley contributed in no small degree to the making of the great treaty with the Sioux in the following summer, whereby this magnificent country was thrown open to civilization.

### **THE TREATY OF 1851, AND ENSUING IMMIGRATION.**

On the 29th of June, 1851, the steamer Excelsior (called by the Indians the Buck boat, from the antlered head of a deer which decorated its prow) transported the treaty commissioners, Hon. Luke Lea and Governor Ramsey, with their attendants and supplies, to Traverse des Sioux, where at sunrise on the morning of the 30th they arrived. On the 20th of July the Benjamin Franklin, No. 1, carried to the same place a party of St. Paul people to witness the famous treaty then in progress. The 138 third and only other boat to ascend the Minnesota this year was the Uncle Toby, which on October 7th conveyed to Traverse des Sioux the first load of Indian goods under the new treaty.

During the fall and winter following this treaty there was a great rush of settlers into the Minnesota valley, and before the spring of 1852 a series of town sites lined the banks of the river from St. Paul to the mouth of the Blue Earth, a distance by water of a hundred and fifty miles. These embryo towns were at once in dire need of communication with the civilized world, that they might be accessible to the swarms of settlers ever pressing westward, and that those locating in them might have their wants supplied.

### **STEAMBOAT TRAFFIC, 1852 TO 1871.**

Among the proprietors of the townsite of Mankato were Henry Jackson and Col. D. A. Robertson, both influential business men of St. Paul. Through their efforts the steamer Tiger, under Captain Maxwell, was induced to make three trips to the remote Blue Earth town in the spring of 1852. She left St. Paul on her first journey April 21st, and returned



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on the 25th of the same month. Her second and third trips were made on April 28th and May 18th. Each time she carried a full load of passengers and freight for Mankato and intermediate points. The Minnesota now becoming too low for navigation, the Tiger went elsewhere.

In the meantime, by an act of Congress passed June 8th, 1852, this river, which heretofore the whites had called the St. Peter's, had its ancient Sioux name, Minnesota, restored to it. The mid-summer rains restored to it, also, its navigable condition, and Colonel Robertson succeeded in chartering the Black Hawk to make three trips to Mankato during July. The Black Hawk was a stern-wheel boat, just built the winter before at Rock Island, and was well adapted for the Minnesota trade, being 130 feet long with a 21-foot beam, and drawing only 17 inches of water. She had thirty state rooms, with berths for sixty passengers, and was capable of carrying 130 tons. Her captain was W. P. Hall, and her clerk W. Z. Dalzell. She left St. Paul on her first voyage up the Minnesota on the third of July, having on board, besides freight, forty passengers, fifteen of whom were booked to Mankato. The boat arrived there on the morning of 139 the 5th, and returned the next day to St. Paul. On the 12th and 21st of July the Black Hawk departed on her second and third trips to Mankato, and during the same season she made two trips to Babcock's Landing, just opposite the present city of St. Peter, and one to Traverse des Sioux.

The Jennie Lind also entered the Minnesota trade this year, and during July made one trip to Babcock's Landing, one to Traverse des Sioux, and one to Holmes' Landing (now Shakopee). The steamer Enterprise also went as far as Little rapids, making in all thirteen departures from the St. Paul wharf during this very first year of traffic with white settlers.

The first boat to enter the Minnesota in 1853 was the Greek Slave, a new boat built especially for this river by Captain Louis Robert. She left St. Paul on April 4th with 150 passengers, besides a full load of freight, and on the 7th arrived at Traverse des Sioux and Mankato. Another boat to enter the trade this year was the Clarion, a small stern-wheel vessel of seventy-two and one-half tons burden, owned by Captain Humbertson. On her

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first voyage she carried an excursion to Traverse des Sioux, where she arrived on April 22nd.

Two events of 1853, of much importance in the development of the Minnesota river trade, were the establishing upon its head waters of the Sioux Agencies and the erection in their vicinity of Fort Ridgely. The necessity thus created, of transporting to such a distance up the river the large quantity of supplies required annually by both soldier and Indian, gave an impetus for years to the steamboat traffic of the Minnesota.

The West Newton, Captain D. S. Harris, secured the contract to convey the troops with their baggage from Fort Snelling to the new post. She was a small packet, 150 feet long and of 300 tons burden, and had been bought the summer before by the Harris brothers to compete with the Nominee in the Mississippi river trade. She left Fort Snelling on Wednesday, the 27th day of April, 1853, having on board two companies of the Sixth U. S. Regiment, in command of Captains Dana and Monroe. To help carry the baggage, she had two barges in tow. The Tiger had also departed from, St. Paul on the 25th, and the Clarion on the 26th, each with a couple of barges in tow, heavily loaded with supplies for the new fort and the agencies. The West Newton, being the swiftest boat, passed the Clarion at 140 Henderson, and the Tiger near the Big Cottonwood, and thence to the site of the new fort at the mouth of Rock creek, was the first steamer to disturb the waters of our sky-tinted river.

The Minnesota this year remained navigable all summer, and a number of boats ascended it to Fort Ridgely and the Lower Sioux Agency, while others went to Mankato and other points. The passenger travel, as well as the freight trade, was excellent. On two successive trips in July, the little Clarion carried 150 passengers at a time, and other boats were equally crowded. In September two St. Paul gentlemen, C. D. Fillmore and William Constans, bought each a small boat for the Minnesota trade. Mr. Fillmore's boat, the Humboldt, started on her first trip on the 13th of that month; and on the 24th followed Mr. Constans' boat, the Iola.

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In all there were forty-nine boat arrivals in 1853 from the Minnesota river at the St. Paul wharf. The names of the boats, and the number of trips made by each, so far as known, were as follows: Greek Slave, 4 trips; Clarion, 16; Tiger, 13; Black Hawk, 8; West Newton, 1; Shenandoah, 3; Humboldt, 2; Iola, 2. The Greek Slave opened the season on the 4th of April, and the Iola closed it on the 2nd of November.

The winter of 1853–4 was mild and open and the river broke up early, but without the usual freshet, for there had been but little snow. The Greek Slave was the first boat on the Minnesota again in 1854, and her first trip was an excursion to Shakopee on the 21st of March. The Humboldt followed her in a day or two, and during March and April made about a dozen trips, but owing to low water did not get above the rapids more than once or twice. The Greek Slave only attempted one trip up the Minnesota, this being in April.

The success of the prior season had awakened in the boatmen great expectations for this year, and much preparation for it was made during the winter, but all was doomed to disappointment. Captain Samuel Humbertson, who the year before had been the most active in the trade, and who had started above the mouth of the Blue Earth the townsite of South Bend, which he hoped would become the chief city of the valley, during the winter sold his little Clarion, and built for himself at Belle Vernon, Pa., on the Monongahela river, a fine new boat 170 feet 141 long, with thirty-eight well furnished state rooms. He christened her the Minnesota Belle, and, loading her full with immigrants, intended mostly for his new town, on May 3rd started up the Minnesota. To the captain's great chagrin, his new boat failed to climb the Little rapids, near Carver, and he abandoned the river, townsite and all, in disgust.

A rainfall a few days later, however, swelled the river sufficiently for the Black Hawk to reach Traverse des Sioux on the 20th day of May. For some time, and until after July 20th, the Iola and the Montello ran with fair regularity between the Little rapids and Traverse, supplementing the Black Hawk, Humboldt, and other boats, plying below the rapids.

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Large keel boats, denominated barges, propelled after the ancient method by a crew of men with poles, became common on the river this year. Andrew G. Myrick placed two of these barges on the river in charge of the Russell boys. These vessels were from 50 to 60 feet long, 10 to 12 feet wide, and with sides four to five feet high, along the top of which was fastened a plank walk, for the use of the pole men. A small low cabin for the cook was built in the stern, and during foul weather a big tarpaulin was spread over the goods. A full crew consisted of a captain, who also acted as steersman, ten to a dozen pole men, and a cook. With a fair stage of water the usual speed up stream was twelve to fourteen miles a day, but if sandbars or rapids interfered a mile or two would be a hard day's journey. Down stream, however, they would travel much faster. Most of the supplies for Fort Ridgely and the Sioux Agencies, as well as for all up river towns, had to be transported this year in such barges.

The total steamboat arrivals from the Minnesota at St. Paul in 1854 did not exceed thirty, and few of them came from beyond the Little rapids. This, however, does not include trips by the Montello and the Lola between the rapids and points above.

The snowfall in the winter of 1854–5 was again rather meager, and consequently the river continued low during the spring of 1855, though not as low as the prior season. The Globe, a new boat belonging to Louis Robert, with Nelson Robert as captain, was the first steamer, leaving St. Paul on the 8th of April. The Black Hawk, the J. B. Gordon, No. 2, the H. S. 142 Allen, and the Montello, with the barges Russell and Master, promptly joined in the trade. A fair business was done in April, but during the midsummer months navigation was mostly suspended, because of low water. The fall rains caused quite a freshet, and there was a brisk trade again for a month or two, continuing as late as the middle of November. The Time and Tide, Berlin, Equator, and Reveille, had now joined with the other boats in the Minnesota river trade.

Louis Robert, having the contract this year to deliver the Sioux annuities, took them up to the Agency late in October in the Globe, of which Edwin Bell was then captain. Within

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two miles of the landing the boat struck on a rock, and the goods had to be unloaded on the river bank. While Captains Robert and Bell were gone to carry the Indian money, amounting to \$90,000 in gold, to Fort Ridgely, the Indians, who were gathered in force to divide the provisions, carelessly set fire to the dry grass, which was quickly communicated to the pile of goods, and most of them, including fifty kegs of powder, were destroyed.

The names of boats engaged in the Minnesota river trade during this year 1855, and the number of trips taken by each from St. Paul, were as follows: Globe, 14 trips; Black Hawk, 13; Berlin, 13; Time and Tide, 8; H. S. Allen, 22; J. B. Gordon, No. 2, 28; Equator, 6; Reveille, 3; Montello, 1; and Shenandoah, 1. The total of the trips definitely recorded is thus 109. The Humboldt also ran on this river in the years 1854 to 1856. The first to enter had been the Globe on April 8th, and she was the last to leave on the 16th of November.

An event of 1855 which tended to stimulate the commerce of the Minnesota for some years, was the removal of over 2,000 Winnebagoes from the upper Mississippi to a reservation near Mankato.

A good fall of snow during the winter of 1855–6 caused an abundant supply of water in the river next spring. The navigation of the Minnesota for the season of 1856 was opened on April 10th by the Reveille, a stern-wheel packet, in command of Captain R. M. Spencer. Four days later, the Globe, with Nelson Robert as captain, departed from St. Paul for the same river, and she was followed the next day by the H. S. Allen.

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The Reveille was considered a fast traveler, and as an instance of her speed it is recorded that on her second trip of this year she left St. Paul at 2 p. m. on Thursday, April 17th, with 132 passengers and a full load of freight, and arrived at Mankato by Saturday; and that leaving the latter place at 5 a. m. the next day, she reached St. Paul by 8 p.m. that evening, after having made twenty-four landings on the way.

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On the 5th of May, the Reveille landed at Mankato a company of settlers numbering two or three hundred, known as the Mapleton Colony; and the following Saturday (May 10th) the H. T. Yeatman landed at South Bend a company of Welsh settlers from Ohio, numbering 121 souls. The Yeatman was a large stern-wheel boat, about the largest that ascended the Minnesota, and this was her first trip. She continued in the trade only a few weeks, while the water was high. Her captain was Samuel G. Cabbell. Regular trips were made this year by several boats to Fort Ridgely and the Lower Sioux Agency, and some ascended to the Upper Agency, at the mouth of the Yellow Medicine river.

The time table of Louis Robert's fine packet, the Time and Tide, issued for this season, shows the distance from St. Paul to Yellow Medicine to be 446 miles. To an old settler, who actually traveled on a Minnesota river steamboat in those early days, the idea of a time table may seem rather amusing; for if there was anything more uncertain as to its coming and going, or more void of any idea of regularity, than a steamboat, the old time traveler never heard of it. Now stopping in some forest glen for wood, now tangled in the overhanging boughs of a tree with one or both smoke-stacks demolished, now fast for hours on some sandbar, and now tied up to a tree to repair the damage done by some snag, while the passengers sat on the bank telling stories, or went hunting, or feasted on the luscious wild strawberries or juicy plums which grew abundantly in the valley, were common occurrences in steamboat travel. Many a pioneer remembers the Time and Tide, and how its jolly captain, Louis Robert, would sing out with sonorous voice, when the boat was about to start, "All aboard! Time and Tide waits for no man," and then add, with a sly twinkle in his eye, "and only a few minutes 144 for a woman." Though we of today may think such method of travel tedious, yet it had many pleasant features, and to the people of that time, unaccustomed to the "flyers" and "fast mails" of today, it seemed quite satisfactory.

The names of the boats which left the St. Paul wharf in 1856 for the Minnesota river, and the number of trips taken by each, were as follows: Equator, 46 trips; Reveille, 40;

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Globe, 34; Wave, 29; Minnesota, 20; Clarion, 12; Time and Tide, 12; Berlin, 10; and H. T. Yeatman, 4. The total trips so recorded are 207, being an increase of nearly a hundred over the preceding year. The steamboats H. S. Allen and Humboldt were also on the Mississippi river this year.

The season of 1857 opened auspiciously with a good stage of water in the Minnesota. The Equator, a well built packet of fair size in charge of Captain Sencerbox, was the first boat. She left St. Paul for Mankato on the morning of April 12th with a full load of passengers and freight. She was followed the next day by the Clarion, which had been bought the year before by Captain O. D. Keep and brought back to the Minnesota, where she had done such good service in 1853 under Captain Humbertson. Captain Keep and his clerk, John C. Hoffman, resided in the vicinity of Shakopee, and they kept the Clarion in the Minnesota trade until she sank near the St. Paul levee two or three years later.

Two fine new boats, destined to do much service on the Minnesota, entered this year. They were the Frank Steele, a splendid side-wheel packet owned by Commodore Davidson, and the Jeannette Roberts, a large stern-wheel packet owned by Captain Louis Robert. The Antelope, a small craft which Captain Houghton ran regularly for years between St. Paul and Chaska, began her career this season. Other important boats which engaged in the Minnesota trade this year for the first time were the Medora, J. Bissell, Isaac Shelby, Fire Canoe, and Red Wing, all good sized packets, especially the last two.

During the spring of this year steamboating on the Minnesota was unusually brisk. Eighteen boats arrived at St. Peter during a single week in May, and by June 1st thirty-four boats had passed that town for points above. It was no unusual occurrence 145 to see two or three boats unloading at once at the Mankato wharf.

The names of the boats which left the St. Paul wharf this year 1857 for the Minnesota, and the number of trips made by each, were as follows: Antelope, 105 trips; Jeannette Roberts, 40; Isaac Shelby, 36; Medora, 29; Frank Steele, 20; Equator, 14; Time and Tide,

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13; Clarion, 12; Minnesota, 8; Ocean Wave, 6; J. Bissell, 5; Red Wing, 3; and Fire Canoe, 1. The total trips were 292, an increase of 85 from the year before. The last boat was the Antelope which arrived at St. Paul on the 14th of November.

The winter of 1857–8 proved very mild, and the river broke up unusually early. The first boat to leave St. Paul for the Minnesota was the Jeannette Roberts, Captain Thimens, on March 20th, but the Medora, Captain Charles T. Hinde, following in a short time, passed her before reaching Shakopee. In doing so, the boats rubbed too close together, and one of the Medora's wheels was injured, so that she had to tie up an hour or two for repairs. She managed again to overtake and pass the Jeannette while the latter was unloading at Traverse des Sioux, and reached Mankato as the first boat on the morning of March 22nd, followed there an hour or two later by the Jeannette.

Notwithstanding that there had been hardly any snow the previous winter, the heavy spring, and summer rains kept the river in a good navigable condition, and boats of the size of the Frank Steele and Isaac Shelby were able to ascend to Mankato late into September. The Freighter was the only new boat to engage in the Minnesota trade.

This spring J. R. Cleveland and C. F. Butterfield built a barge at Mankato 75 feet long by 12 feet wide and 4 feet high, which they christened "The Minneopa." It was employed by Mr. Cleveland during the period of low water for many years in the Mankato traffic. It was operated in the old way, by a poling crew, and it usually took two weeks to make the trip to St. Paul and back to Mankato.

There were 179 steamboat arrivals at Mankato this year, counting those arriving from points above as well as from below; the former, though, did not exceed 25 or 30. 10

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The list of the boats engaged in the Minnesota trade this year, 1858, and the number of trips made by each, as shown by the St. Paul wharfmaster's book, are as follows: Antelope, 201 trips; Frank Steele, 54; Jeannette Roberts, 35; Time and Tide, 30; Freighter,



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18; Isaac Shelby, 16; Ocean Wave, 12; Clarion, 11; Medora, 8; Fire Canoe, 6; and Minnesota, 3. The total recorded trips were thus 394, an increase of 102 over the year before. The steamboats Belfast and Equator and the barge Minneopa also plied on the river this year, but the number of their trips cannot be given.

In 1859, the river broke up early after a mild winter, and the Freighter arrived at Makanto, the first boat, on March 27th, having left St. Paul two days before. An abundant rainfall kept the river in good navigable condition its entire length through most of the season. The Favorite, an excellent sidewheel packet of good size, built expressly for the Minnesota trade by Commodore Davidson, entered as a new boat this spring.

As the water was quite high in the upper Minnesota, Captain John B. Davis of the Freighter conceived the idea of crossing his boat over from the Minnesota to Big Stone lake and thence to the Red river, and accordingly about the last of June he attempted the feat. Whether the crew found too much whiskey at New Ulm or the boat found too little water on the divide, authorities differ, but all agree that the captain and his crew came home in a canoe about the last of July, passing Mankato on the 25th of the month, having left his steamboat in dry dock near the Dakota line. The Freighter was a small, flat-bottomed, square-bowed boat. The Indians pillaged her of everything but the hull, and that, half buried in the sand about ten miles below Big Stone lake, remained visible for twenty or thirty years. The captain always claimed that if he had started a month earlier his attempt would have been successful.

The steamboat arrivals at Mankato this year were in total 131, as follows:

From St. Paul	From the West	Favorite	44	4	Jeannette Roberts	31	8	Frank Steele	19	11								
Freighter	2	1	Ocean Wave	2	2	147	Time and Tide	2	1	Isaac Shelby	1	1	Belfast	1	1	Total	102	29

The total arrivals from the Minnesota at the St. Paul wharf were 300, which included some boats, like the Antelope, which did not come to Mankato at all. Navigation continued this

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year until quite late, the last boat to pass down over the Little rapids being the Jeannette Roberts on the 6th of November.

In 1860, the Minnesota again broke up quite early and the first boat, the Time and Tide, left St. Paul March 19th, reaching St. Peter on March 21st, and Mankato the next morning. The river was quite low this spring and none of the larger boats were able to ascend it. A number of small boats of light draft were, however, put into the trade instead, such as the Little Dorrit, the Eolian, which Captain Davidson had succeeded in raising the fall before from the bottom of lake Pepin where she had lain since the spring of 1858, and the Albany, a small new boat of very light draft which Captain Davidson had built the winter before expressly for the Minnesota in low water. The Jeannette Roberts managed to get up as far as Mankato a few times, and once in July, when there was a small freshet, even to the Sioux Agency. After a little rainfall in June, the Time and Tide, the Favorite, and the Frank Steele, came up as far as St. Peter for a trip or two. Most of the time, however, the Albany, which the old settlers used to say only required a light dew to run in, was the only boat which could float at all above the Little rapids. For a time she supplemented the Favorite at the rapids, but finally the water got so low that navigation suspended entirely, except that the little Antelope kept her trips to Shakopee and Chaska. Cleveland's barges (for now he had two of them) had the monopoly of the Minnesota river traffic for the most of the season. They could carry ten or twelve tons each, and were kept busy until the river closed in November. There were only 250 steamboat arrivals at St. Paul from the Minnesota this year, and the Antelope made 198 of these.

The spring of 1861 opened with a big flood in the Minnesota. The first boat, the Albany, left St. Paul on March 30th, and arrived at Mankato the 1st of April. She was officered by 148 J. V. Webber, captain (who was now the owner, having purchase chased her from the Davidson company in March), Warren Goulden, first clerk, and Moses Gates, engineer. It was claimed by the older Indians and traders that the upper Minnesota was higher this spring than it had been since 1821. In April the Jeannette Roberts ascended farther up the river by two miles than any steamboat had ever done before, and might easily have

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accomplished what the Freighter attempted and failed to do in 1859, to wit, pass over into the Red river, if she had tried; for the two rivers were united by their high flood between lakes Big Stone and Traverse.

This season the Minnesota Packet Company, of which Captain Orren Smith was president, put two first class boats, the City Belle and Fanny Harris, into the river to compete with the Davidson and Robert lines. The Fanny Harris, on her first trip, which occurred during the second week in April, went to Fort Ridgely, and brought down Major (afterwards General) Thomas W. Sherman and his battery to quell the southern rebellion, which had just started. With her also went the Favorite and brought down Major (afterwards General) John C. Pemberton, with his command of eighty soldiers, the most of whom, being southern men, were much in sympathy with their seceding brethren.

The City Belle made her first appearance at St. Peter and Mankato on May 18th, under command of Captain A. T. Chamblin. She was a fine side-wheel packet, and about the largest boat that ever entered the Minnesota trade. The river, though high in the spring, did not continue so very long, and by the last of June became so low that navigation above the rapids had to be suspended.

The arrivals at St. Peter and Mankato from below numbered 66, as follows: Albany, 22 trips; Favorite, 18; City Belle, 10; Jeannette Roberts, 9; Eolian, 4; Frank Steele, 2; and Fanny Harris, 1.

Boats below the rapids, however, continued to run the most of the season, and the total arrivals at St. Paul from the Minnesota were 318.

The barges of Captain Cleveland were kept busy in the traffic between Mankato and points below. The first shipment of wheat in bulk from the Minnesota was made in June of this 149 year, 1861, on one of these barges. It comprised 4,000 bushels, and was taken direct to La Crosse. Heretofore it had been shipped in sacks. Wheat had now become the principal export of the valley. During the earlier years nearly all the freight traffic on the

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river had been imported, but by this time the export of grains had grown to be an important item. With so many Indians in the valley the shipment of furs, which at first had been about the only export of the country, still continued valuable; but furs, because of their small bulk, cut but little figure in the boating business. This year the value of the furs from the Sioux Agencies was \$48,416; and from the Winnebago country \$11,600.

The spring of 1862 witnessed another great flood in the Minnesota, and navigation was opened by the Albany. She only got as far as St. Peter on her first voyage, arriving there on April 3rd, and reaching Mankato on her second trip on the 13th. The Pomeroy, an excellent new boat, was put into the trade this spring by the Davidson company. Two small boats, the Clara Hines and G. H. Wilson, entered the Minnesota also for the first time this spring. Messrs. Stagg and Handy of St. Paul put a small boat called "New Ulm Belle," which they built with the machinery of the Clarion, also into the Minnesota, traffic, in charge of Captain Scott. The Favorite, officered by Edwin Bell, captain, and N. B. Hatcher, clerk, and the Jeannette Roberts, officered by Nelson Robert, captain, and Jack Reaney, clerk, were active in the trade this year as usual.

The register of boat arrivals at Mankato for the year shows a total of 70, as follows:

From below From above Albany 19 1 Jeannette Roberts 13 8 Favorite 9 1 Clara Hines 8 1 Pomeroy 6 1 Ariel 2 G. H. Wilson 1 Total 58 12

The length of the period of navigation, from April 13th to July 20th, was three months and seven days. Wheat shipped 150 from Mankato on these boats amounted to 62,000 bushels, and 8,000 bushels were shipped from South Bend.

Below the rapids, navigation continued until late in November, and the total arrivals at the St. Paul wharf from the Minnesota were 413, the largest record in the river's history. The fall navigation may have been slightly stimulated by the requirements of the Sioux war. Immediately on news of the outbreak, the Favorite, under Captain Bell, carried the first soldiers of General Sibley's command, with such arms and ammunition as could be

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hastily gathered at Fort Snelling and St. Paul, to the defense of the frontier, taking them to Shakopee and one company as far as the Little rapids.

The Jeanette Roberts was the first boat in 1863. She arrived in Mankato on April 3rd, and was there greeted by the entire population of the town, including about 1,000 soldiers, who made the echoes ring with their cheers. It was customary in those steamboat days for young and old, male and female, in every town along the river, at the deep baying sound of the first whistle to gather at the levee to welcome the first boat. To the lonely pioneer, the vigils of a long winter in the wilderness were trying, and the arrival of the first boat was an important event in his life, when he heard from his childhood home and the outside world, and when his exhausted larder would be replenished and a few relishes would relieve the monotonous round of corn cake.

Much of the traffic this year consisted in transporting troops and supplies in connection with the Sioux war. The Favorite, the winter before, had been lengthened by cutting her in two and inserting a piece thirty feet long into the middle, just ahead of the machinery and wheels. This materially increased the boat's capacity, but rather spoiled her appearance. She was taken entirely into the Government service this season, and one of her first duties was the transportation of the 270 condemned Sioux from their Mankato prison to their new quarters at Davenport, Iowa. They left Mankato on April 22nd, and the forty-eight acquitted Indians with fifteen or twenty squaws, who had been acting as cooks, went with them.

During the winter, under the religious instruction of the missionaries, Williamson, Riggs, and Pond, a wonderful transformation had occurred in these wild savages of a few months before,—a transformation that proved sincere and lasting,—and as they sailed down the river, they sang religious hymns in their native tongue. Affecting, indeed, was the scene, as in passing Fort Snelling and St. Paul, where their squaws and papooses were imprisoned, they sang their favorite hymn, "Have Mercy upon us, O Jehovah," to the tune of Old Hundred.

In May the Winnebagoes were to be removed from Blue Earth county to their new agency in Nebraska, and on the evening of the 8th of this month the Pomeroy and Eolian arrived at Mankato to take part in the transportation of this tribe. Eleven hundred of them had already pitched their tepees in what was called Camp Porter, on the river bank just back of where now stands the Hubbard and Palmer mill in Mankato. A few days before, a party of them had killed two Sioux who were visiting their agency, and, stretching their scalps on a couple of hoops decked with colored ribbons and fastened to poles, they paraded the streets with them. On this night of May 8th, from sundown to sunrise, the people of Mankato were regaled with the tom-tom music and savage yells of the scalp dance. On Saturday, May 9th, they began to embark, 405 going on the Pomeroy, and 355 on the Eolian. Both boats started from the Mankato wharf at two o'clock in the afternoon. Conspicuous on the Pomeroy's hurricane deck were planted the poles bearing the two Sioux scalps, around which sat, first, the war party of about twenty young bucks, half naked, their bodies daubed with mud and paint, and with wreaths of green weeds and grass on their heads, and next to them squatted a number of other warriors, all chanting in time with two or three tom-toms a monotonous "He-ah, he-ah," as they journeyed down the river,—a scene quite in contrast with that presented by their Sioux brethren on their departure two weeks before. The next day, the Favorite took 338 of the remaining Winnebagoes, and on the 14th the Pomeroy came after the last of them. In all there were 1,856 removed.

Besides the traffic incident to military operations, there were shipped from Mankato alone over 60,000 bushels of wheat this spring. The Prairie du Chien Railway Company put a new boat, named the Flora, into the Minnesota river trade this season. She was a stern-wheeler of about the size of the Jeannette Roberts.

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The summer of 1863 was exceptionally dry, and though boats were able in May to ascend to Camp Pope, twenty-five miles above Fort Ridgely, by the middle of June the river had fallen so that all steamboat traffic above the rapids was suspended.

The imperative need of freight transportation in the valley became yearly more insistent, and the inability of steamboats to meet the demand, especially in periods of drouth, caused a great increase this summer in the use of barges, amounting to a new departure in the river traffic. Hereafter, instead of carrying freight in large steamers, it was found much more expedient to carry it in strings of barges drawn by small tug-boats. Among others, Messrs. Temple and Beaupre of St. Paul put four barges into the Minnesota traffic to ship freight from Mankato and points between it and the Little rapids to Prairie du Chien. The total steamboat arrivals from the Minnesota this year at the St. Paul wharf were 177.

During the winter of 1863–4 the Davidson Company built a fine new packet, about 150 feet long, for the Minnesota river trade, which, in honor of the thriving town of the mouth of the Blue Earth, they christened "The Mankato." The citizens of that municipality, in appreciation of the compliment, purchased a fine silk flag to present to the boat on her first arrival; but unfortunately that opportunity did not come until a year later, for during 1864 about the only boat which reached Mankato was the Jeannette Roberts on April 16th.

The barge traffic flourished, however, in spite of the low water, and steamboats were used on the lower Minnesota. The total arrivals of steamboats at St. Paul from the Minnesota this year were 166; and of barges, 82.

In January, 1865, the state legislature appropriated \$3,000 to improve the Minnesota river; and Major E. P. Evans, of Blue Earth county, and John Webber, of Ottawa, Le Sueur county, were appointed commissioners to oversee the work. Accordingly in February Major Evans with a force of fifty men cleared the river of snags, and later they made other improvements, which aided navigation considerably.

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By the spring of 1865 the severe drouth of the last two years was broken. The first boat to leave St. Paul for the Minnesota 153 was the Ariel on the second of April. She arrived at St. Peter on the 3rd, and at Mankato on the 4th.

Among the new boats to enter the Minnesota this year were the Mollie Mohler, Julia, G. H. Gray, Otter, Mankato, Lansing, General Sheridan, and Hudson. The Mollie Mohler had been built the winter before for the Minnesota river trade; she was 125 feet long, and had accommodations for fifty-six cabin passengers. Her captain was George Houghton. The Julia was a stern-wheel boat, built the same winter by the Northwestern Packet Company expressly for the Minnesota trade. Her length was 141 feet, her beam 28 feet, and her total capacity 300 tons, although drawing only seventeen inches of water. Jack Reaney, for years the popular clerk of the Jeannette Roberts, was her captain. The G. H. Gray was built in the spring of 1863 on the St. Croix. She was 139 feet long, 19 feet wide, and drew fourteen inches of water.

The trade this year was quite brisk as long as the season lasted. The boats were able to reach St. Peter and Mankato for about two months in the spring, and by reshipping at the Little rapids were able to get to the rapids just below St. Peter for two or three weeks later.

During the season, the number of steamboat arrivals at St. Paul from Carver and the Little rapids was 150; and from points above the rapids as far as from Mankato, 40. A few trips were also made to the upper Minnesota. The total arrivals from this river at St. Paul in 1865 was 195. This of course does not embrace trips made by the Albany and other boats between the rapids and points above. Twenty barges, each loaded with 200 barrels of lime from Shakopee, and 97 barges loaded with wood, averaging 40 cords each, from various points in the valley, also arrived at the St. Paul wharf. No records of the wheat barges were kept, as they generally carried their cargoes to La Crosse or Prairie du Chien, but they were quite numerous.



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In 1866 the first boat to arrive at St. Peter and Mankato was the Chippewa Falls, on the 15th of April. The Minnesota, a splendid packet built the winter before at Cincinnati, entered for the first time this season. The principal boats engaged this year in the traffic were the Julia, Mankato, Mollie Mohler, Stella 154 Whipple, Albany, Otter, Pioneer, Tiber, and Pearl. By the 16th of June there had been 38 arrivals at Mankato, which number during the season was swelled to 50, having a total capacity of 3,750 tons.

The barge trade by this year had grown to immense proportions, over 175 barges being used. The Tiber towed out of the Minnesota and down the Mississippi at one load a string of barges carrying bushels of wheat. Some of the barges were of great size. Among the largest was one owned by Captain Davidson, called "Little Mac," which was 142 feet long by 25 feet in width, of 114 tons burden

The wheat shipments from the principal points in the Minnesota valley during 1866 amounted to 688,641 bushels; as follows: From Belle Plaine, 45,000 bushels; Faxon, 12,600; Henderson, 29,400; Le Sueur, 22,000; Ottawa, 5,000; St. Peter, 68,850; Mankato, 190,000; South Bend, 25,000; Shakopee, 106,791; Carver, 80,000; and Chaska, 104,000.

The navigation this year, however, was quite poor, owing to low water through most of the season. A United States survey of the river was made during the summer with a view to improving it.

The arrivals at the St. Paul wharf from the Minnesota in 1866 were only about 100. The decrease was probably due to two causes, first the construction to Belle Plaine of the St. Paul and Sioux City railroad, which cut off most of the boat traffic on the lower and most navigable portion of the river; and, second, that most of the freight was now being carried in barges which having no occasion to stop in St. Paul, passed down the Mississippi without being registered in the St. Paul wharfmaster's books.

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The year 1867 was exceptionally good for boating, as a fine stage of water continued during the entire season. The first boat to land at Mankato was the Chippewa Falls on the 18th of April.

During the summer and until the first of September, the Mollie Mohler, Captain H. W. Holmes, made daily trips between Mankato and Belle Plaine, a distance of 175 miles, making close connections at the latter place with the St. Paul trains. She would leave Mankato every morning at 8 o'clock and arrive at Belle Plaine about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, and then leave Belle Plaine on her return journey at 6 o'clock p. m. and reach Mankato by sunrise. As indicative of her speed, she would at times make the trip from Mankato to St. Peter, a distance of 30 miles, in one hour and twenty minutes; and as evidence of the abundant water in the rivers this season, the Mollie on the 9th of June ascended the Blue Earth and Le Sueur rivers to the Red Jacket mills, situated about where now the Milwaukee railway crosses the latter stream, and carried hence 425 barrels of flour. Up to September, when the Mollie Mohler retired, there had been 166 steamboat arrivals at Mankato, of which the Mollie had made 87.

After this the Otter ran quite regularly until the 30th of October, making two or three trips a week, and the Ellen Hardy and Mankato made a few trips, while the Ariel made regular trips between Mankato and St. Peter and the railroad terminus, until the river closed about the 10th of November.

Congress had made an appropriation of \$7,000 this year towards the improvement of the river, and in July bids were received by Gen. G. K. Warren, government engineer, on two proposed contracts for such improvement, one covering the first section, reaching from the Redwood to Mankato, and the other for the second section, extending from Mankato to the Little rapids. Not much came of this river improvement project, and it was soon abandoned, as the advent of railroads into the valley rendered it unnecessary.

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The principal river casualty of 1867 was the sinking of the Julia two miles below Mankato on the morning of the 10th of May. She struck a snag as she was coming up the river under a full head of steam, well loaded with passengers and freight, and sank in twelve feet of water. None of the passengers were injured, and nearly all the freight was recovered, but the boat itself was a wreck. Her machinery and upper deck were eventually removed, but the hull lies in the sands of the Minnesota to this day.

In 1868, the Chippewa Falls was again the first boat at St. Peter and Mankato, arriving at the latter place on the 31st of March. Navigation was not nearly as good this year as the year before, yet by the first of May there had been over 50 steamboat arrivals at Mankato. No new boat, as far as known, entered the river this year; and quite a few of the boats prominent 156 in the trade the prior season had disappeared, among them the well known Mollie Mohler and Jeannette Roberts. Most of the trade was confined to points above the terminus of the railroad, which by October had reached Mankato, the first passenger coach on the St. Paul and Sioux City road arriving there on the 6th of that month.

The first boat to reach Mankato in 1869 was the Ellen Hardy on the 18th of April. The Otter, St. Anthony Falls, Pioneer, Tiger, and our old friend, the Jeannette Roberts, were engaged in the Minnesota trade this season, besides the Ellen Hardy. The business men of New Ulm this spring, seeing no immediate prospect of a railroad for their town, bought the little steamer Otter for \$3,000, and put her into the trade between New Ulm and Mankato, where she made regular trips twice to three times a week. Her average load of freight used to be 3,000 bushels of wheat. A number of trips were made to Redwood. The navigation continued until rather late. On November 3rd, there were three boats unloading at once at the Mankato levee: the Pioneer, Otter, and Tiger.

The first boat to reach Mankato in 1870 was the Otter from New Ulm, on April 5th; and the Mankato on April 13th was the first boat to arrive from St. Paul. During the early spring there was quite a brisk trade; and the smaller boats, like the Tiger and Otter, continued to run even through July and August. The arrivals at Mankato in April and May alone

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numbered 43; and the total arrivals for the season wore about 80. The Mankato brought down from New Ulm on the 2d of May 17,000 bushels of wheat on one load, and two days later the Dexter brought down in two barges 21,000 bushels. The Otter and Tiger plied mostly between Mankato and New Ulm; while the Mankato, Dexter, and St. Anthony Falls, made frequent trips to St. Paul. As an instance of the speed of the Tiger, it is stated that on May 14th she made the run from Redwood Falls to Mankato in thirteen and a half hours. In the spring of this year the Jeannette Roberts, one of the best known and longest in service of all the Minnesota steamboats, was sold to go to the Wisconsin river trade.

In 1871 the Otter was the first boat again at Mankato, arriving on April 4th from New Ulm. On April 15th came the Pioneer, the first boat from St. Paul. On April 18th, as the 157 Mankato was approaching St. Peter on her first trip of the season, she struck a snag a few rods below the present wagon bridge in that city and sank. Her passengers and crew received no harm. After lying in the river channel for over a year, she was finally raised and taken below, never to enter the Minnesota again. The Otter, Pioneer, and Hudson, were busily employed during April and May (which was as long as navigation this year lasted) in carrying wheat and other freight from New Ulm and Redwood to South Bend, where it was transferred to the railroad. It is said of the Otter, that on May 11th of this year she made the run from West Newton to South Bend, a distance of 110 miles, in less than seven hours running time, being the quickest time the journey was ever made by any boat. She brought with her two barges loaded with 2,000 bushels of wheat.

With this season ends practically the navigation of the Minnesota river, for the Northwestern railway reached New Ulm this year.

### **THE LAST STEAMBOATS, 1872 TO 1897.**

The Osceola, Captain Haycock, a small boat, ascended the river as far as Redwood once in the spring of 1872, twice in the spring of 1873, and once in the spring of 1874. The water, however, was quite low each season and navigation difficult. In 1876, on the high

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water of the spring, the Ida Fulton and Wyman X, came up this river; and ten years later, in 1886, one trip was made by the Alvira. Again for ten years no steamboat was seen on the Minnesota, until, taking advantage of a freshet in April, 1897, Captain E. W. Durant of Stillwater ran his boat, the Henrietta, a stern-wheel vessel 170 feet long, with forty state rooms, on an excursion to Henderson, St. Peter, and Mankato.

With the advent of civilization, the surface of the country has been exposed by cultivation so that much of the moisture which in the olden days drained into the creeks and rivers now evaporates, causing all of our streams to shrink to half their former size. Thus it has come to pass that he who sees the Minnesota of today wonders that it was ever a navigable stream. But the old settler who remembers the river in its prime, when it carried on its swelling bosom the commerce of its great valley, can see in the dim vistas of the past a different scene; and many a tale of thrilling interest can he tell of those bygone days, when our sky-tinted river was navigable.

### **LISTS OF STEAMBOATS, 1850 TO 1897.**

The following are lists of the steamboats on the Minnesota river for each year, with the names of their captains when known, as compiled from the records of wharfmasters and from newspaper files. The totals of steamboat arrivals at the St. Paul wharf from the Minnesota river are also noted for each year.

1850. Anthony Wayne, Capt. Dan Able; Nominee, Capt. Orren Smith; Yankee; Capt. M. K. Harris. Total arrivals, 4.

1851. Benjamin Franklin, No. 1. Capt. M. W. Lodwick; Excelsior, Capt. James Ward; Uncle Toby. Total arrivals, 3.

1852. Black Hawk, Capt. W. P. Hall; Enterprise; Jenny Lind; Tiger, Capt. O. H. Maxwell. Total arrivals, 13.

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1853. Black Hawk; Clarion, Capt. Samuel Humbertson; Greek Slave, Capt. Louis Robert; Humboldt; Iola; Shenandoah; Tiger, Capt. Barton; West Newton, Capt. D. S. Harris. Total arrivals, 49.

1854. Black Hawk, Capt. W. P. Hall; Globe, Capt. Haycock; Greek Slave, Capt. Louis Robert; Humboldt; Iola, Capt. William H. Sargent; Minnesota Belle, Capt. Samuel Humbertson; Montello; War Eagle. Total arrivals, 30.

1855. Berlin; Black Hawk. Capt. O. H. Maxwell; Equator, Capt. Maxwell; Globe, Captains Louis Robert and Edwin Bell; H. S. Allen. Capt. G. W. Farman: Humboldt; J. B. Gordon, No. 2, Capt. Maxwell; Montello; Reveille; Shenandoah; Time and Tide. Total arrivals, 109.

1856. Berlin; Clarion, Capt. O. D. Keep; Equator, Capt. O. H. Maxwell; Globe. Capt. Nelson Robert; H. S. Allen, Capt. George D. Martin;; H. T. Yeatman. Capt. Samuel G. Cabbell; Humboldt; Minnesota; Reveille, Capt. R. M. Spencer; Time and Tide, Capt. Louis Robert; Wave. Total arrivals, 207.

1857. Antelope, Capt. George Houghton; Clarion, Capt. John C. Hoffman; Equator, Captains Marvin and Sencerbox; Fire Canoe; Frank Steele, Capt. Davidson; Isaac Shelby, Capt. Bishop; J. Bissell, Capt. Marvin; Jeannette Roberts. Captains Thimens and Simmons; Medora. Captains Charles T. Hinde and McLagan; Minnesota, Capt. Sencerbox; Ocean Wave; Red Wing; Time and Tide, Capt. Louis Robert. Total arrivals, 292.

1858. Antelope, Capt. George Houghton; Belfast; Clarion; Equator; Fire Canoe; Frank Steele, Capt. William F. Davidson; Freighter, Capt. John B. Davis; Isaac Shelby, Capt. Bishop; Jeannette Roberts, Capt. Thimens; Medora, Capt. Charles T. Hinde; Minneopa (barge), Capt. J. R. Cleveland; Minnesota; Ocean Wave; Time and Tide, Capt. Nelson Robert. Total arrivals, 394.

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1859. Antelope, Capt. George Houghton; Belfast; Eolian; Favorite, Captains Edwin Bell and Peyton S. Davidson; Frank Steele, Capt. P. S. Davidson; Freighter, and Isaac Shelby, Capt. John B. Davis; Jeannette Roberts, Capt. L. Robert; Minneopa (barge), Capt. J. R. Cleveland; Ocean Wave; Time and Tide, Capt. N. Robert. Total arrivals, 300.

1860. Albany, Capt. John V. Webber; Antelope, Capt. George Houghton; Eolian, Capt. Thimens; Favorite, Capt. P. S. Davidson; Frank Steele, Capt. N. B. Hatcher; Jeannette Roberts, Captains N. Robert and F. Aymond; Little Dorrit; Minneopa (barge), Capt. Cleveland; Time and Tide, Capt. N. Robert; Victor (barge). Total arrivals, 250.

1861. Albany, Capt. Webber; Antelope, Capt. George Houghton; Ariel, Capt. James Houghton; City Belle, Capt. A. T. Chamblin; Clara Hines; Eolian; Fanny Harris; Favorite, Capt. P. S. Davidson; Frank Steele; Jeannette Roberts; Victor (barge). Total arrivals, 318.

1862. Albany, Capt. Webber; Antelope, Capt. George Houghton; Ariel, Capt. James Houghton; Clara Hines; Favorite, Capt. Edwin Bell; G. H. Wilson; Jeannette Roberts, Capt. N. Robert; New Ulm Belle, Capt. Scott; Pomeroy. Total arrivals, 413.

1863. Albany, Capt. Webber; Antelope, Capt. George Houghton; Ariel, Capt. James Houghton; Eolian; Favorite; Flora; G. H. Gray; Jeannette Roberts, Capt. N. Roberts; Pomeroy; Stella Whipple. Total arrivals, 177.

1864. Albany, Capt. Jones; Ariel, Capt. James Houghton; Express; Firesides, Capt. Joseph Hopkins; Henderson (barge), Capt. Frank Aymond; Jeannette Roberts; Mollie Mohler, Capt. George Houghton; Monitor; St. Cloud, Capt. James Houghton; Stella Whipple, Capt. J. V. Webber; Turtle. Total arrivals, 166.

1865. Addie Johnson; Albany, Capt. A. R. Russell; Annie Johnson; Ariel, Capt. H. W. Holmes; Chippewa Falls; Clara Hines, Capt. Spear Spencer; Enterprise, Capt. Merrill; G. H. Gray, Capt. Isaac Gray; G. H. Weeks; G. H. Wilson; General Sheridan; Julia, Capt. John H. Reaney; Hudson; Lansing; Mankato, Capt. J. V. Webber; Mollie Mohler, Capt.

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George Houghton; Otter, Capt. Bissell; Stella Whipple, Capt. J. Webber; Tiger, Capt. A. R. Young. Total arrivals, 195.

1866. Addie Johnson; Albany, Capt. Harry Holmes; Alice; Ariel; Chippewa Falls, Capt. Alex. Griggs; Damsel; Delaware; Enterprise; Flora; G. B. Knapp; G. H. Gray, Capt. Isaac Gray; G. H. Weeks; G. H. Wilson; General Sheridan; Hudson, Capt. Sencerbox; Jennie Baldwin, Capt. George W. Duncan; Julia, Capt. John H. Reaney; Lady Pike; Lansing; Mankato; Minnesota; Mollie Mohler, Capt. Harry W. Holmes; Otter, Capt. Bissell; Pearl; Pioneer; Planet (barge); Stella Whipple, Capt. J. P. Merrill; Tiber, Capt. Andy Miller. Total arrivals, about 100.

1867. Ariel; Chippewa Falls; Clipper; Ellen Hardy; Flora; G. B. Knapp; Hudson; Jeannette Roberts; Julia, Capt. John H. Reaney; Mankato; Mollie Mohler, Capt. H. W. Holmes; Otter, St. Anthony Falls, Capt. Aaron Russell; Tiber. Total arrivals of steamboats, 100; of barges, 105.

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1868. Ariel, Capt. James Houghton; Ben Campbell; Buckeye; Chippewa Falls; Clipper; Cutter, Capt. J. V. Webber; Ellen Hardy, Capt. Russell; Flora; G. H. Wilson; Hudson, Capt. George W. Duncan; Jeannette Roberts, Capt. Robert; Mankato; Otter; Pioneer; Wyman X. Total arrivals of steamboats, 80; of barges, 100.

1869. Chippewa Falls, Capt. James Houghton; Ellen Hardy, Capt. Hardy; Jeannette Roberts, Capt. John Webber; Mankato, Capt. James Houghton; Otter; Pioneer, Capt. McLagan; St. Anthony Falls; Tiger; Wyman X., Capt. Wyman X. Folsom. Total trips below Mankato, about 50; above Mankato, about 80.

1870. Dexter; G. B. Knapp; Jeannette Roberts; Mankato, Capt. James Houghton; Otter Capt. John Segar; Pioneer; St. Anthony Falls; Tiger, Capt. Hancock. Total trips below Mankato, about 50; above Mankato, about 100.



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1871. Hudson; Mankato, Capt. James Houghton; Otter, Capt. Boncoeur Subilier: Pioneer. Total trips below Mankato, about 20; above Mankato, about 50.

1872. Osceola, one trip.

1873. Osceola, two trips.

1874. Osceola, Capt. Haycock, one trip.

1876. Ida Fulton; Wyman X.

1886. Alvira, one trip.

1897. Henrietta, Capt. E. W. Durant, one trip.

In a single list, as follows, these steamboats of the Minnesota river are arranged alphabetically, with information, so far as found, of their place and date of building, and their hull tonnage. Where further details are at hand, "sd." and "st." note respectively side-wheel and stern-wheel boats, and the figures in parentheses give the size of the boats in feet.

Addle Johnson 220 Albany Ottawa. Minn. 1860 42 Alice Alvira Annie Johnson 171 Antelope 1850 37 Anthony Wayne, sd 1848 Ariel 1861 67 Belfast 1858 156 Ben Campbell, st. (29 by 182) Shoustown, Pa. 1852 287 Ben Campbell [year 1868] 143 Benjamin Franklin. No. 1 Brownsville, Pa. 1847 181 Berlin Black Hawk, st. (21 by 130) Rock Island, Ill. 1852 130 Buckeye 50 Chippewa Falls 1865 91 161 City Belle, sd Murraysville 1854 216 Clara Hines, sd. 1861 80 Clarion, st Monongahela, Pa. 1851 72 Clipper Belle Vernon, Pa. 1855 68 Cutter 1867 92 Damsel 200 Delaware 168 Dexter 102 Ellen Hardy, st 1867 77 Enterprise [year 1852] Enterprise 1865 80 Eolian Brownsville. Pa. 1858 106 Equator, st. Beaver, Pa. 1855 105 Excelsior Brownsville, Pa. 1849 172 Express Fanny Harris Brownsville, Pa. 1855 160 Favorite, sd 1859 115 Fire Canoe Lawrence 1854 166 Firesides Flora, st. 1860 159 Frank Steele, sd. 1857 136 Freighter Zanesville, O. 1855 93 G. B. Knapp 61 G. H. Gray, st (19 by 139) St. Croix River. 1863 50 G. H. Weeks 160 G. H. Wilson 1862 100 General Sheridan, sd. 1865 35 Globe 1854 Greek Slave, sd 1852 H.

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S. Allen H. T. Yearman, st Freedom, Pa. 1852 165 Henderson (barge) Henrietta, st. (170 feet long) Hudson 1865 125 Humboldt 1853 Ida Fulton 220 Iola, st. 1853 Isaac Shelby 1857 100 J. B. Gordon, No. 2 J. Bissell Jeannette Roberts, st. 1857 112 Jennie Baldwin, st 193 Jenny Lind Zanesville, O. 1851 107 Julia, st. (28 by 141) Pittsburg, Pa. 1865 158 Lady Pike 210 Lansing 1865 84 Little Dorrit 162 Little Mac (barge, 25 by 142) 114 Mankato (about 150 feet long) 1864 113 Medora 1857 101 Minneopa (barge, 12 by 75) Minnesota Elizabethtown 1849 142 Minnesota Belle (170 feet long) Belle Vernon, Pa. 1854 226 Mollie Mohler, sd. (22 by 125) Carver, Minn. 1864 94 Monitor 1864 15 Montello 1853 New Ulm Belle Nominee Shoustown, Pa. 1848 213 Ocean Wave 1857 60 Osceola Otter 1865 30 Pearl Cincinnati. 1851 184 Pearl [year 1866] 51 Pioneer 75 Planet (barge) Pomeroy Red Wing 1857 150 Reveille, st. 1855 St. Anthony Falls, sd. 1866 40 St. Cloud Shenandoah 1853 Stella Whipple 1863 74 Tiber Marietta, O. 1851 184 Tiber [years 1866–67] 78 Tiger, sd, Sauk County, Wis. 1849 84 Tiger 1865 17 Time and Tide, sd. Freedom, Pa. 1853 131 Turtle, sd. (14 by 100) Henderson, Minn. 1864 Uncle Toby 1845 Victor (barge) Viola 36 War Eagle Fulton, Ill. 1849 296 Wave Elizabethtown 1848 89 West Newton (150 feet long) 1852 300 Wyman X., st. (22 by 120) Taylor's Falls, Minn. 1868 92 Yankee 1849

The first boats on this river for each year, and the dates of their departure from the St. Paul wharf (or, for a considerable number, as indicated, of their arrivals at St. Peter and Mankato), are noted in the following table.

Anthony Wayne, June 28, 1850.

Excelsior, June 29, 1851.

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Tiger, April 21, 1852.

Greek Slave, April 4, 1853.

Greek Slave, March 21, 1854.

Globe, April 8, 1855.

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Reveille, April 10, 1856.

Equator, April 12, 1857.

Jeannette Roberts, March 20, 1858.

Freighter, March 25, 1859.

Time and Tide, March 19, 1860.

Albany, March 30, 1861.

Albany (arrival at St. Peter), April 3, 1862.

Jeannette Roberts (arrival at Mankato), April 3, 1863.

Jeannette Roberts (arrival at Mankato), April 16, 1864.

Ariel, April 2, 1865 (arriving April 4 at Mankato).

Chippewa Falls (arrival at Mankato), April 15, 1866.

Chippewa Falls (arrival at Mankato), April 18, 1867.

Chippewa Falls March 29, 1868 (arriving March 31 at Mankato).

Ellen Hardy (arrival at Mankato), April 18, 1869.

Otter (arrival at Mankato from New Ulm), April 5, 1870; Mankato (arrival from St. Paul), April 13, 1870.

Otter (arrival at Mankato from New Ulm), April 4, 1871; Pioneer (arrival from St. Paul), April 15, 1871.

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Osceola, May 15, 1872.

Osceola, April 12, 1873.

Osceola, April 25, 1874.

Ida Fulton and Wyman X., April 18, 1876.

Alvira, 1886.

Henrietta, April 23, 1897.